

**AY 2002-2003**

**THE NEWS MEDIA INDUSTRY**

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5 June 2003

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Report Documentation Page				Form Approved OMB No. 0704-0188	
Public reporting burden for the collection of information is estimated to average 1 hour per response, including the time for reviewing instructions, searching existing data sources, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing the collection of information. Send comments regarding this burden estimate or any other aspect of this collection of information, including suggestions for reducing this burden, to Washington Headquarters Services, Directorate for Information Operations and Reports, 1215 Jefferson Davis Highway, Suite 1204, Arlington VA 22202-4302. Respondents should be aware that notwithstanding any other provision of law, no person shall be subject to a penalty for failing to comply with a collection of information if it does not display a currently valid OMB control number.					
1. REPORT DATE <b>05 JUN 2003</b>		2. REPORT TYPE <b>N/A</b>		3. DATES COVERED <b>-</b>	
4. TITLE AND SUBTITLE <b>The News Media Industry</b>				5a. CONTRACT NUMBER	
				5b. GRANT NUMBER	
				5c. PROGRAM ELEMENT NUMBER	
6. AUTHOR(S)				5d. PROJECT NUMBER	
				5e. TASK NUMBER	
				5f. WORK UNIT NUMBER	
7. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES) <b>The Industrial College of the Armed Forces National Defense University Fort McNair Washington, DC 20319-5062</b>				8. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION REPORT NUMBER	
9. SPONSORING/MONITORING AGENCY NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES)				10. SPONSOR/MONITOR'S ACRONYM(S)	
				11. SPONSOR/MONITOR'S REPORT NUMBER(S)	
12. DISTRIBUTION/AVAILABILITY STATEMENT <b>Approved for public release, distribution unlimited</b>					
13. SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES <b>The original document contains color images.</b>					
14. ABSTRACT					
15. SUBJECT TERMS					
16. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF:			17. LIMITATION OF ABSTRACT  <b>UU</b>	18. NUMBER OF PAGES  <b>23</b>	19a. NAME OF RESPONSIBLE PERSON
a. REPORT <b>unclassified</b>	b. ABSTRACT <b>unclassified</b>	c. THIS PAGE <b>unclassified</b>			

# NEWS MEDIA

**ABSTRACT:** The American news media has two fundamental roles in our democracy: that of eyewitness, giving citizens critical information, and also as the watchdog, providing another arm of “checks and balances” within our governmental system. A central feature of the news media industry is the inherent tension between providing a public service and making a profit. This tension has had an effect on the current condition of the news media, characterized by the following eight trend areas: attitudes toward the news, news consumption, interest in international news, consolidation, government deregulation, coverage of national security issues, “infotainment,” and the “digital revolution.” In general, the financial pressures associated with consolidation and deregulation have been detrimental to the quality of news coverage and cost the news media a certain amount of credibility. However, there have also been successes, such as the recent experiment with embedded reporting during Operation IRAQI FREEDOM. In the long term, technological developments, such as the ability of individuals to tailor the news they receive and “pull” that information on demand, will powerfully affect the profitability of the news business. For the present, the delicate balance between journalistic excellence and financial profitability, though sometimes shaky, continues to be the hallmark of the American media, making it the most successful and objective in existence today.

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## **PLACES VISITED:**

### **Domestic:**

America Online, Dulles, VA  
*Armed Forces Journal International*, Washington, DC  
Associated Press, NY, NY  
Associated Press Broadcast Center, Washington, DC  
Bloomberg News, NY, NY  
Columbia University, Graduate School of Journalism, NY, NY  
Foreign Press Center, Dept of State, Washington, DC  
Fox News, NY, NY  
Freedom Forum, Arlington, VA  
George Mason University, Communications Dept, Fairfax, VA  
*Military Times*, Springfield, VA  
National Public Radio, Washington, DC  
*The New York Times*, NY, NY  
Office of the Secretary of Defense, Public Affairs, Pentagon, Washington, DC  
*Pravda*, NY, NY  
Project for Excellence in Journalism, Washington, DC  
Reuters, Inc., NY, NY  
*US News and World Report*, Washington, DC  
Voice of America, Washington, DC  
*The Wall Street Journal* .com, NY, NY  
*The Washington Post*, Washington, DC  
*The Washington Times*, Washington, DC  
WTOP Radio, Washington, DC

### **International:**

BBC World Service, London, England  
*The Economist*, London, England  
*Financial Times*, London, England  
*The Guardian*, London, England  
Hir TV (News TV), Budapest, Hungary  
Inforadio (News Radio), Budapest, Hungary  
JOJ Television, Bratislava, Slovakia  
Klubradio (Commercial), Budapest, Hungary  
Media Roundtable Discussion, Budapest, Hungary  
*Nepszabadsag* (National Newspaper), Budapest, Hungary  
RTL Klub TV (Commercial), Budapest, Hungary  
Slovak Radio, Bratislava, Slovakia  
Slovak TV, Bratislava, Slovakia  
Sky News, London, England  
Slovak Television (State-Owned Television), Bratislava, Slovakia  
TASR (State-Owned News Agency), Bratislava, Slovakia  
*The Times*, London, England  
United Kingdom Ministry of Defence, London, England  
United States Embassy, Bratislava, Slovakia

**INTRODUCTION:** The Industry Studies Program at the Industrial College of the Armed Forces is designed to investigate the resources component of national security by assessing the state of a selected industrial sector. This report analyzes the news media industry from a strategic perspective, and was developed through independent research as well as interaction with the news media organizations listed on page two. Visits with these organizations, both domestic and international, reinforced the seminar's understanding of our "free press" and its fundamental role in a democracy. Specifically, two primary roles of the news media were identified: 1) eyewitness, with responsibility to "provide citizens with the information they need to be free and self-governing," <sup>[i]</sup> and 2) watchdog, often characterized as the fourth estate, <sup>[ii]</sup> providing another arm of "checks and balances" within our separation-of-powers governmental system.

Over the course of the semester, it became evident that there is an inherent tension in the news media between providing a public service and making a profit. This tension in balance will remain a challenge for the future.



The news media is a powerful force in our society. It plays an essential role in national security by informing the citizenry and satisfies one of our most basic needs—the need for information. News educates, entertains, challenges, and often affirms what we believe. News helps us to better understand and navigate the world we live in by fostering public debate. A respected journalist visiting our seminar offered that the news media doesn't tell us what to think as much as it tells us what to think about. In other words, the news media is the prism through which we view much of the world. "Independent, aggressive journalism strengthens American democracy, improves the lives of its citizens, checks the abuses of powerful people, supports the weakest members of society, connects us all to one another, educates and entertains us. News matters." <sup>[iii]</sup>

**THE NEWS MEDIA INDUSTRY DEFINED:** At the beginning of the semester, we asked ourselves, "What is the news media? What is the industry's 'product'?" Unlike industries such as aircraft and munitions that have identifiable outputs, the news media's product is not easily defined. Essentially, the news media produces information. But this fails to convey the true power and influence of this industry. A legal definition offered by the US Court of Appeals in Washington, D.C. defines "news media" as a group that "gathers information of potential interest to a segment of the public, uses its editorial skills to turn the raw material into a distinct work, and distributes that work to an audience." <sup>[iv]</sup>

The news media—understood to be the aggregate of newspapers, magazines, broadcasting and the Internet devoted to the dissemination of news information—generates its source of power by educating, shaping and mobilizing public opinion. At its worst, the news media, in this "speed-to-market" industry, can be an agent of disorder and confusion. At its best, the news media exerts great influence on national security. <sup>[v]</sup> In a democratic society, the news media is the "intelligence apparatus of those in whom ultimate authority is supposed to reside—the people." <sup>[vi]</sup>

Although keeping up with the news is at least somewhat important to almost all Americans,

people diverge radically in what interests them, which media they use, and how often they follow the news. Gender, generation, education, socio-economic status, and access to technology are reflected in individual news interests and consumption.<sup>[vii]</sup> Generally, the public gets its news from a variety of sources: newspapers, news magazines, television, radio, and, since the latter part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the Internet.

Media Type	Number of Stations, Newspapers, and News Websites	Where Americans Get Their News <sup>[viii]</sup>	Time Per Day Spent On News <sup>[ix]</sup>	Most Americans turn to television or the Internet for instantaneous coverage
TV	1,721 (FCC licensed) <sup>[x]</sup>	75%	28 minutes	
Radio	13,383 (FCC licensed) <sup>[xi]</sup>	Over 50%	16 minutes	
Newspaper	1,468 (dailies) <sup>[xii]</sup>	60%	15 minutes	
Internet	Not Reported	25%	Not Reported	

of an unfolding event; whereas, for in-depth coverage and analysis, newspapers or news magazines seem to be the medium of choice. Regardless, this industry exists to collect raw information, give it context, and subsequently package it for various audiences.

**GOVERNMENT: GOALS AND ROLE:** The federal government has a responsibility to the American people and to the news media industry to ensure the enormous benefits it imparts to our political system, the American people, and to the world are not compromised. To understand the government’s role, one must examine the roots of our free press.<sup>[xiii]</sup>

Though subjected to scurrilous press coverage themselves, the Founding Fathers realized the freedom to publish one’s views was essential to the vitality of the Republic. Thomas Jefferson observed, “If it were left to me to decide whether we should have a government without a free press or a free press without a government, I would prefer the latter.”<sup>[xiv]</sup> And so, the First Amendment was added to the Constitution: “Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances.”<sup>[xv]</sup>

This text forms the basis upon which freedom of the press is practiced in the United States today. Though the words are bold and simple in their construction, their meaning has been debated for many years.<sup>[xvi]</sup> On the one hand, there are those who see the protections of the First Amendment as giving the news media *carte blanche* on any matter they wish to investigate or publish: Freedom of the press “includes the freedom to be wrong, even to be irresponsible.”<sup>[xvii]</sup> Others, particularly those subject to that type of coverage, contend the protections of the First Amendment are part of the balance of powers intended to prevent abuse by any one group of people or by one branch of government.<sup>[xviii]</sup>

Regardless of which view prevails at any given time, the press (now widely defined as the news media) has the unique distinction of being the only industry in American society to receive expressed constitutional protection. Our travels highlighted the strengths and weaknesses of this system. The British news media have what appears to be a superior mechanism to protect national security matters through the Official Secrets Act.<sup>[xix]</sup> Among the most unique government/media relationships we encountered is the British “D-Notice Committee.” It is a voluntary working arrangement between journalists and an Ombudsman, appointed by the Ministry of Defence, to iron out differences between the press and the military. An open and free press is also valued by the news media within the emerging

democracies of Hungary and Slovakia. While they expressed great admiration for the freedom the First Amendment affords the US press, this protection has not been written into their own constitutions. In any case, the foresight of the Founding Fathers has been justified on many occasions throughout our history, as the press has provided Americans with the facts they need to properly judge events and those who govern the Republic. The intent of the drafters remains crucial to safeguard a free and uncensored press in the future.

**CURRENT CONDITION:** During the course of our research, we identified eight trends within the industry that characterize the current condition of the news media. They include: attitudes toward the news, news consumption, interest in international news, consolidation, government deregulation, coverage of national security issues, “infotainment,” and the “digital revolution.”

Mixed Attitudes Toward the News

The public wants news that is timely and accurate. According to a 2002 Pew Research Center survey, nine out of ten respondents say “it is important that the news be timely, while the same proportion believes it is important the news be accurate.”<sup>[xx]</sup>

Another 2002 Pew Research Center survey shows that the public’s attitude toward the news media has sunk to levels pre-9/11 levels, on measures ranging from professionalism and patriotism to compassion and morality. Prior to the terrorist attacks of 9/11, the news media enjoyed a 73% rating for being highly professional; it is down to 31% today. <sup>[xxi]</sup> During the same period, the news media’s rating for patriotism dropped 20 points from an all time high of 60%. Still, while Americans are once again taking

The Public's News Values				
How important is it that the news ...	— Level of Importance —			
	High	Moderate	Low	DK
	%	%	%	%
Is timely and up to date	89	5	5	1=100
Is accurate	88	5	5	2=100
Contains helpful information	68	19	12	1=100
Covers foreign events	63	23	13	1=100
Fits easily into daily schedule	58	22	18	2=100
Has news personalities you like	47	25	25	3=100
Is enjoyable and entertaining	42	28	30	2=100
Is highly professional	31	32	34	3=100

Table 2. The Public's News Values (Pew Survey, June 2002)

news organizations perform. <sup>[xxi]</sup> But, this is met with some cynicism. A USA Today/CNN/Gallup poll conducted in May 2003 found that only 36% of those polled believe that news organizations get the facts straight. <sup>[xxii]</sup> Interestingly, a Pew study found that two-thirds of Americans believe news organizations are unwilling to acknowledge their errors, and 59% of those polled believe news organizations are politically biased. <sup>[xxiii]</sup>

Decline in News Consumption

Despite a proliferation of news sources to choose from, Americans are consuming less news. This decline is due in part to increasingly busy schedules and a predilection for entertainment. You can see from this

table that news consumption has decreased over the past ten years across all traditional formats. The notable trends in news consumption are: the leveling off of the strong growth in online news consumption and the steady erosion of the regular audience for network evening news over the past decade. However, an increasing number of people skip the news entirely. The proportion of Americans who received no news has doubled from 10 to 20% since 1994. <sup>[xxiv]</sup> Today, the average American dedicates less than one hour a day to newspaper, television and radio news. The decline in time spent on the news has been pronounced among the young. Those under age 25 spend about

half an hour a day on the news, down

from 51 minutes eight years ago. By comparison, people age 65 and older spend an average of 81 minute

### Diminishing Interest in International News

Numerous studies have focused on the decline in and coverage of international news. According to a 2002 survey, Americans say they are generally interested in international news. However, a majority of Americans (6

Call-in radio shows	23 <sup>1</sup>	13	13	14	17
National Public Radio	15	13	15	15	16
Newspaper <sup>2</sup>	38	50	48	47	41
Online news <sup>3</sup>	-	2 <sup>1</sup>	13	23	25

Table 3. Trend in Regular News Consumption (Pew Survey, June 2002)

follow international news only when there is a major development.

This is in contrast to the 37% who consistently track international news coverage. In general, Americans have largely ignored those stories that had no clear American connection. International affairs coverage tends to take a decidedly US-centric point of view. Perhaps this is to capture the average US viewer's attention. Unless a news organization assigns journalists to overseas issues to give syndicated stories a local spin, the stories may not be seen as relevant. Unfortunately, many Americans fail to look further and instead develop a limited perspective of events on the world stage.

Modest Rise in Interest in International News			
Follows ...			
	Very closely	Somewhat closely	Total
%	%	%	%
2002	21	44	65
2000	14	45	59
1998	16	46	62
1996	16	46	62

The Pew survey goes on to

report that Americans stated a variety of reasons for not following international news. For example, the public felt many of the stories were often too repetitious, remote, or bloody. But by far the biggest factor that people cite for tuning out is that they lack the necessary background to keep up with complex stories. Fully, six-in-ten mentioned this as a reason for not following overseas events.

Reasons for Not Following International News			
Those with moderate/low interest in international news:			
	Yes	No	DK
%	%	%	%
Lack of background	65	34	1=100
Nothing ever changes	51	47	2=100
Events don't affect me	45	54	1=100
Too much war/violence	42	56	2=100

### Growing Corporate Ownership & Consolidation

The media landscape is far different than it was half a century ago. Family-owned newspapers and independently-owned networks and radio stations have been replaced by media outlets that are part of large, diversified corporations that are intent upon maintaining profit margins averaging 20%. During the last decade, a wave of consolidation has concentrated media ownership in far fewer hands that control what the public sees and hears. The 1996 Telecommunications Act removed a number of barriers to media consolidation, resulting in over 12,000 mergers valued at \$1.5 trillion.

This corporate consciousness has promoted news operations as moneymakers—news programming has become subjected to the same drive for profit. News for profit is news that must attract ratings from the demographic groups most attractive to advertisers. In the print world, profit-seeking has led to cuts in newsroom resources as well as increased advertising at the expense of news coverage. There is concern within the industry that these cuts result in less diversity, less variety, and a lower quality product for the American audience.

In addition, oftentimes consolidation may lead to a clash between business and journalistic goals. Many within the industry complain they are forced to compromise their journalistic integrity in deference to the “bottom line,” and question whether media organizations can act as “corporate watchdogs” after they are swallowed up by companies such as General Electric, Disney or AOL/Time Warner. In a 2000 poll conducted by the Pew Research Center, 41% of reporters, editors, and news executives responded that they avoided stories to benefit their media company's interests.



## Continuing the Age of Government Deregulation

Clearly one of the paramount issues facing the media today is the issue of further deregulation of an industry already accused of placing profit ahead of public service. Over the past two years, the FCC has conducted studies and reviews of the six remaining rules that influence media ownership to determine if they were still necessary. These rules generally limit cross-ownership of media properties. Some argued that lifting the ban would allow media giants to “gobble up” even more media properties, thus increasing their control of the market.<sup>[xxx]</sup> They also feel strongly that airwaves belong to the public; therefore, the media industry cannot be subject to free market policies. More consolidation will lead to fewer voices and fewer viewpoints.<sup>[xxxii]</sup> On the other side of the fence sit proponents of deregulation, who contend that the ban on cross-ownership is outdated and unnecessary in today’s digital marketplace where citizens have more media choices than any time in history. On June 2, the FCC voted to relax most of the rules in question, potentially opening the door to further consolidation.

What is most interesting about this issue is the public’s reaction to an otherwise invisible process that has, in the past, generally sparked little if any reaction. Surprisingly, that has changed in past months. In response to studies it commissioned on this issue, the FCC received comments from about 13,000 diverse organizations—all concerned that FCC’s decision “could have profound effects on how Americans get their news and information.”<sup>[xxxii]</sup> On the last business day before the FCC vote, a flood of public comments shut down its voice and e-mail systems. In all, the FCC received over 500,000 postcards and comments opposing the rules changes.<sup>[xxxiii]</sup> In Congress, ranking members of the Senate subcommittee that oversees antitrust and competition urged the FCC to “support the public interest in diverse media ownership.”<sup>[xxxiv]</sup>

The significance of this groundswell of interest should not be overlooked, as it points up the concerns over the perceived loss of media diversity and with it, the voices of mainstream Americans. As one media analyst opined: “the marketplace—rather than the public interest—seems to be calling the shots.”<sup>[xxxv]</sup> Is the issue really about democracy or economics? At the heart of this controversy is the question of what the news media is becoming. Does it represent Americans or big business? The answer to that question speaks volumes regarding the value of the news media as an effective tool in pursuing US national security interests into the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

## Growing Impact of “Infotainment”

“Infotainment” is the term that has most commonly been used to describe the blurring between information, including news, and entertainment. Competition for ratings, combined with an increased emphasis on profits, results in an industry in conflict with itself. Traditional news standards may have begun to suffer in the 1980s and 1990s when corporate owners began to treat journalism as just another information product. A network executive notes: “They squeezed the life out of network news in the name of greater profits. News is less profitable than entertainment and needed to be brought into line. People were laid off, foreign news bureaus closed, TV news magazines that celebrate mostly emotional morality plays or sheer fluff were created and became profitable. Only the bottom line counted. Content, over time, reflected the economic motives of the corporate owners.”<sup>[xxxvi]</sup>

Recent demographics have shown that audiences seem to prefer information presented in an entertaining way. Humans are visual and easily stimulated. Style advances (such as graphics, camera work, photography, interactive features, screen crawlers, added sounds) only heighten the temptation to make news more entertaining, with a tendency towards “infotainment. This development runs contrary to journalism’s higher calling: to provide people with the information they need to be free and self-governing. Equally important is journalism’s obligation to tell the truth.”<sup>[xxxvii]</sup>

Respected journalists readily admit that they intentionally arouse emotion in readers with the

hope that they will channel audience excitement into efforts to “write” social wrongs.<sup>[xxxviii]</sup> An esteemed journalist visiting our seminar confirmed the essence of a good story: fear, conflict and humanization.<sup>[xxxix]</sup>

In all segments technology, presentation, and consolidation have caused many consumers of information, including news, to conclude that everything is theatre. Journalism that puts too high a priority on entertaining is almost destined to distort and mislead. Entertainment that masquerades as news is even more insidious because it taints and tarnishes real journalism.<sup>[xl]</sup> A news division president notes, “people start to view television news as a business of celebrity, anchored by celebrities, about celebrities, and we lose the notion that we are all journalists who report.”<sup>[xli]</sup>

In an era of ever expanding outlets of information, it is entirely possible that journalistic standards have suffered. News and entertainment have morphed into “infotainment,” with an emphasis on trivia and news of the lives of celebrities. As a result, the American public is, as media critic Mark Crispin Miller puts it, “fully entertained and half-informed.” (See essay).

### The Digital Revolution

The ongoing digital revolution has had far-reaching impacts on virtually all phases of news development. From reporting to editing, from production to distribution; advanced digital technology has propelled the news media industry into new territory. For good and bad, digital technology allows for the unprecedented ease of manipulation of data and images. Digital technology has also led to the evolution of “backpack journalism,” where it is possible for reporters in the field to collect, edit, and distribute news on their own, and in near-real-time. To ensure accuracy, editors frown on any process that eliminates critical editorial review.

Technology and the low-cost barrier to entry has made it possible for everyday citizens to become news providers via the World Wide Web. It does so without the expense of printing plants or broadcast licenses and without having to submit to the supervision of editors or the discipline of verification that conventional journalism imposes.<sup>[xlii]</sup> The challenge to the consumer is not finding websites, but sorting through the information glut and separating fact from speculation and, in some cases, pure fiction. Many in the traditional print and broadcast media industry segments have commented that the Internet has “stolen” their audience, but recent surveys do not bear this out. In fact, 73% of Americans who go online for news say the Internet has not had an impact on the way they use other media.<sup>[xliii]</sup>

During our visits, it became apparent that a successful business model for news on the Internet is still uncertain. The business model that many news organizations are now utilizing is the tiered subscription service. Success of this “pay for content” model has been limited to “specialized providers, targeting specialized eager audiences”.<sup>[xliv]</sup> The most successful have been marketers with an established brand who charge subscribers for access to specialized economic information. Among them are the Wall Street Journal, Bloomberg News, and The Economist. The public’s perception of a “free” Internet is limiting the growth and economic viability of the Internet news model. One newspaper executive notes, “It’s hard to second-guess history, but if many people could redo history they would prefer that the everything-is-free Internet model had never gained ascendancy.”<sup>[xlv]</sup>

Technology has enabled new ways of receiving and distributing news. One might receive digital news on a PC, handheld computer, cell phone, or wristwatch. Instead of getting what everyone else gets from traditional broadcast “push” delivery modes, digital technology enables “narrowcasting”—or pulling—tailored news based on individual preferences. The younger generation was born digital; they have no history of consuming news in a passive manner. They have no tradition of reading a magazine or newspaper from front to back or watching the evening news.<sup>[xlvi]</sup> They are digital, interactive and

easily absorb multiple sources of information simultaneously. They control the information they use and they do it through technology.<sup>[xlvii]</sup>

Digital technology also facilitates “centralcasting”—the production and distribution of a nightly package of news to local stations from national studios. For example, Sinclair Broadcast Group, with 62 TV stations in 39 cities across America, owns News Central, which has a 40-man crew that produces and distributes “news around the corner” from 600 miles away.<sup>[xlviii]</sup> This vision of “local news” is a way to save money, but highlights the aforementioned industry tension between public service and profit. If the model succeeds, it will forever change the local TV news business. Many view local newscasts as an obligation, the kind of public service the federal government had in mind when it granted companies like Sinclair licenses to operate TV stations in the first place.<sup>[xlix]</sup> (See essay).

### Shallow Coverage of National Security Issues

Broad changes within media culture have adversely impacted coverage of national security. Specifically, national security news coverage has diminished in quality and comprehensiveness as companies—in a “rush to ratings”—gravitate toward “mediagenic” confrontations where the views and antics of news entertainers are of greater interest than the national security experts they interview.<sup>[i]</sup>

There is also a growing lack of widespread, substantive, journalistic expertise in covering national security. While national-level correspondents are regarded as some of the best in the business, local journalists do not enjoy the same reputation. Many reporters who cover national security issues do not possess the background to report authoritatively. The dwindling pool of expert, national-security journalists suffers from an entrenched view that the best reporters are “jacks of all trades.”<sup>[ii]</sup>

In addition, competition within the news media has led to a phenomenon of “herd journalism,” which can be described as “the tendency of the media to cover the same events in much the same way, ignoring other developments and other issues.” The news media often attempts to decide in collective fashion what the “story” of the day will be—it is safer to agree in advance what the story is and run with the herd. The result is “sequential” news reporting—a series of stories day-to-day, week-to-week—often without context.<sup>[iii]</sup>

These trends indicate national security coverage has become more superficial—almost trivial—and sensational, resulting in a public that is less informed of national security issues. However, there are exceptions to these developments. The recent experiment to “embed” media within military units opened opportunities for journalists to become better acquainted with one key facet of national security: the US military.

The comprehensive embedded media program began in earnest in October 2002 when Pentagon public affairs personnel invited Washington news media bureau chiefs to collectively work out the way ahead. The issues and compromises that arose from these meetings established the framework for DoD public affairs guidance on embedded media. This framework successfully managed the tension between the news media’s need for access and DoD’s need for operational security. Furthermore, it holds promise as a reusable template for future military operations. (See essay).

**CHALLENGES:** The condition of the news media, as discussed above, provides substantial challenges to the industry as a whole and to the individual firms that compete within it. The twin forces of consolidation and deregulation serve to further intensify the market forces and competitive business environment, which have been so detrimental to quality news coverage thus far. The cost cutting and infotainment aspects of news coverage are natural results of the competitive pressures brought on by both of these phenomena. Only time will tell us whether the industry has the self-discipline to reverse these troublesome trends and focus on hard news the public needs to see, provided in a format that appeals to most viewers.

It is not, however, the fault of the market, which provides American news consumers with

precisely those products they want to view. The freedom to choose and the evolving culture of America have placed a premium on the infotainment trend. We can expect the trend to continue so long as Americans tune in to that type of coverage.

The practical and financial complexities of fashioning news coverage in the rapidly developing world of technology also afford great challenges for the industry. The ability to provide near-real-time coverage (as seen on 9/11) and real-time coverage from the battlefield (as we saw in Operation IRAQI FREEDOM) put ever-increasing pressure on those who edit the news to make decisions on the fly. The consumer consistently moves closer and closer to the reporter in the field and accuracy is not always the result. The ability of firms to fashion successful business models to make Internet news pay will also be a source of struggle in the coming years. Those who master this forum may well be the long-term winners.

The last, and perhaps greatest, challenge for the industry is to regain the trust of the general public. The confidence of the news consumer is fundamental to the long-term vitality of journalism and the recent record is not a strong one. We genuinely hope those who seek to restore the good name of quality reporting will win the day—for national security truly depends on a well-informed populace.

**OUTLOOK:** In view of the challenges facing the industry, the American news media continues to play a critical role in sustaining US democracy and national security. An educated and involved public serves the business and ethical interests of the industry, as well as provides a sound foundation for our representative form of government. The recent experiment with embedded journalists is one more step in the process of ensuring the people know and see what their government and their fellow citizens are doing. This “education and training role” of journalism would be further enhanced if news media companies increased training within their own ranks and adopted professional standards for investigation and reporting.

In the short term, the industry is clearly in transition, with the effects of technology, the potential for further deregulation, and the powerful impact of corporate consolidation all changing the basic structure of the industry in fundamental ways. Not to be overlooked, the American public’s confidence in the veracity of reporting is of paramount importance to the news media’s credibility. The declining trust of readers and viewers needs to be addressed within the industry to safeguard its critical truth-seeking role in a democratic society. “In this business, where honesty and trust are at the heart of everything we do, plagiarism and lies can’t be ignored.”<sup>[iii]</sup> Jayson Blair’s unprofessional behavior is an indictment against all reporters and editors; thereby, undermining public trust and confidence in the news media. In this dynamic environment, it will be more important than ever for leaders in the profession to set and enforce ethical business standards.

In the long term, the ability of individuals to tailor the news they receive and “pull” that information to them on demand will powerfully affect the profitability of the news business. This development will force difficult choices on corporations that have grown accustomed to profit margins well outside what most industries can generate. On the international level, information will become increasingly ubiquitous and will grow beyond the control of any national government, likely destabilizing those who have suppressed information for their own purposes in the past. The international news market is being influenced by sources such as SkyNews and Al Jazeera. These and similar entities are positioned to absorb market share from those companies unwilling or unable to provide news to Americans who insist on a broader view of events and their significance.

**ESSAYS ON MAJOR ISSUES:** The following essays amplify the most significant findings during the course of our study and merit further discussion.

## **MEDIA CONSOLIDATION AND DEREGULATION**

By Lt Col Deb Buonassisi, USAFR

With COL Steve Salata, USA

The news media landscape is far different than it was a century ago when family-owned news media outlets were run with slight, if any, profit margins and the notion of public service was generally more important making money. Today, news media outlets have become highly lucrative for some corporate behemoths that enjoy profit margins averaging 20 percent.<sup>[liv]</sup> In 1983, fifty corporations dominated the mass media market. Constant mergers have fed what has become a media leviathan. In 1998, 12,000 mergers occurred, valued at \$1.5 trillion. Viacom merged with CBS in 1999, with a value of over \$37 billion, only to be eclipsed a year later by the merger of AOL with Time Warner.<sup>[lv]</sup> This merger frenzy impacts what we hear, read and see.

The print world has seen intense consolidation. Due to “corporate newspapering,” a relatively small number of conglomerates own the majority of the nation’s most-read papers. For example, in early 2000, the Tribune Company (publisher of the *Chicago Tribune*) took over the Times Mirror Company, publisher of the *Los Angeles Times*, *Newsday* and other respected newspapers. The broadcast medium is no different. The six major networks are all owned by large corporations: ABC is owned by Disney, CBS and UPN by Viacom, NBC by General Electric, Fox by News Corporation, and WB by AOL-Time Warner.<sup>[lvi]</sup> In the world of cable seven firms control more than 75 percent of the country’s cable channels and programming.<sup>[lvii]</sup> In 1996 Congress passed a law repealing the restriction on the number of radio stations owners can control in a single market. The mergers began immediately. Before 1996, the highest number of stations owned by a single company was 65. Now corporate giant Clear Channel Communications owns over 1,225 local radio stations, approximately 970 more than its closest competitor.

The Federal Communications Commission (FCC) was created in 1934 to ensure the airwaves were independent, diverse and local in the face of an explosion of radio stations that began in the 1920s. In 1975, the FCC initiated the cross-ownership rule prohibiting a company from owning both a newspaper and a television station in the same market with the intention to maximize the diversity of information the public consumed. Media companies opposed to this restriction became optimistic when Congress passed the 1996 Telecommunications Act requiring the FCC to examine cross-ownership rules every two years with a view toward eliminating the outdated or unnecessary. Furthermore, the District of Columbia Circuit Court of Appeals has repeatedly overturned FCC rules that “lacked adequate justification.” Consequently, the FCC announced in September 2001 that it would conduct a comprehensive review of the six remaining controls regulating media ownership.

Proponents and opponents of government regulations see things differently when considering FCC regulations on cross ownership. Proponents feel strongly that airwaves belong to the public; therefore, the media industry cannot be subject to free market policies. Opponents of FCC limits contend that the ban on cross ownership is outdated and unnecessary in today’s digital marketplace and that powerful media giants will be stopped from “overmerging” by traditional trust-busting of the Justice Department.

Any effort to impose limits on corporations in their use of the airwaves is routinely met with an army of industry lobbyists charging Capitol Hill with potentially enormous campaign contributions for key members of Congress. Fifty of the largest media companies (and their four trade associations) spent \$111.3 million to lobby Congress and the White House between 1996 and 2000.

Oftentimes, consolidation leads to a clash between business and journalistic goals. Many within and outside of the industry complain they are forced to compromise their journalistic integrity in deference to the “bottom line.” Furthermore, many question whether the media organizations can act as “corporate watchdogs” after they are swallowed up by companies such as General Electric or AOL/Time Warner. Will they be permitted to critically and objectively report news about their parent corporations? In a 2000 poll conducted by the Pew Research Center for the People and the Press, 41 percent of reporters, editors, and news executives responded that they avoided stories to benefit their media company’s interests. A 1997 survey by the organization Fairness & Accuracy in Report (FAIR)



found that almost 75 percent of investigative reporters and editors reported that advertisers had “tried to influence the content” of news at their station.<sup>[lviii]</sup>

Has the drive for profit changed the way news is presented? A Project for Excellence in Journalism study compared news content in 1977, 1987 and 1997. Network evening news programs saw a remarkable drop in coverage of “hard” news (government, military, domestic and foreign affairs) from 67 percent to 41 percent. In the same twenty-year period, the amount of lifestyle and entertainment news rose from 14 percent to 25 percent. The manner in which news magazines marketed their product changed as well. From 1977 to 1997, the percentage of covers with political or international figures decreased by 60 percent.<sup>[lix]</sup>

Does more news mean better news? Supporters of FCC limits believe the answer is a resounding “no.” First, information presented by multiple outlets is often recycled. For example, a reader of *Newsweek* may see a similar, if not identical, story in its sibling publication, the *Washington Post*. And, unfortunately, in the rush to get the story on the air before its competitors, many outlets broadcast incomplete information supplemented by supposition and faulty analysis by “talking heads” whose only knowledge of the facts comes from what they read on the teleprompter. News and entertainment have morphed into “infotainment,” with an emphasis on trivia and the lives of celebrities.

Unfortunately, the FCC seems to consider the news media as a business and Americans as consumers rather than citizens. The dissemination of information should not be treated merely as a business, but as a public trust.

Interestingly, the FCC’s review of media ownership rules sparked unexpected interest in the potential effects on the media industry – a virtual “democratic revolution against media consolidation,” according to Robert McChesney.<sup>[lx]</sup> In response to studies it commissioned, the FCC received comments from about 13,000 organizations, all concerned with how further consolidation could affect how Americans get their news and information. What is especially interesting is that the public had, up to this point, shown little if any knowledge of the impending rule changes. In fact, most Americans know little or nothing about media consolidation. A survey conducted by The Project for Excellence in Journalism working with the Pew Research Center revealed that, at one point, 72% of those polled heard “nothing at all” about the proposed FCC media ownership proposals.<sup>[lxi]</sup>

In Congress, Senate subcommittee members that oversee antitrust and competition have urged the FCC to “support the public interest in diverse media ownership.” Democrat Byron Dorgan warned FCC Chairman Michael Powell that it would be a huge mistake if the FCC was contemplating elimination of the barriers to media concentration. Fellow Democrat Ron Wyden voiced his discontent by opining that the FCC looks to be shifting policy so that “one company could own everything in town.”<sup>[lxii]</sup> Even within the FCC there was concern. Commissioner Michael Copps stated: “We have a model to look for what eliminating concentration protections might do to the media – the radio industry....” At stake, he urged, is the issue of whether the remainder of the media will suffer the same ills.<sup>[lxiii]</sup>

Despite the public’s concerns regarding further media deregulation, on June 2, 2003 the FCC voted to remove several of the remaining rules, paving the way for even more consolidation of media interests and, some would argue, more media giant monopolization of an industry already accused of favoring profit over public service. Supporters of the FCC decision argue that this was the right step in view of the dynamic nature of today’s news media, and that the industry has never been healthier. Others argue that this spells the end of media diversity and, in a sense, a facet of our democracy.

Although Congress and the courts have mandated that the FCC review and jettison rules that are no longer in the public interest, there is no clear definition of “public interest.” FCC Chairman Powell continually struggles with finding a definition: “It’s an empty vessel in which people pour in whatever their preconceived views or biases are.”<sup>[lxiv]</sup> Networks with the responsibility to provide public

interest broadcasting argue that highly-rated shows like “American Idol,” which draws millions of viewers, are in the “public interest” based on their popularity. Consumer and educational groups disagree, arguing that such rationalizations allow networks to avoid their legal obligations. <sup>[lxv]</sup>

Who is right? Again, is an abundance of similar news and entertainment broadcasted economically and widely better for the American public than potentially less news and entertainment provided in a more localized format? The answer depends, of course, on who is being asked. Perhaps the important point is that the question continues to be asked. This may be the best way to ensure that the issue is never far from consideration as the news media continues to struggle with re-defining itself into the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

## **EMBEDDED JOURNALISM: THE SIGNIFICANCE OF OPERATION IRAQI FREEDOM MEDIA COVERAGE**

By Col David Gurney, USMC

Certainly with regard to the public good and the news media, any good story requires context. In this the Spring of 2003, our troops are in Iraq with the expressed aims of changing the regime, disarming that nation of its weapons of mass destruction, and restoring human rights. The “fog” of this war is not only in the smoke of the battlefield but in the news, analysis, and commentary that swirl around the media world. In that maelstrom it is useful to look at how the world learns about us and how we learn about the world.

In truth, relations between the US military and the press have been exceedingly poor since the Vietnam War, when reporters were allowed—for the first time—nearly unlimited access to combat forces with no censorship. Many in the military were deeply unimpressed by the experiment, perceiving that certain members of the news media intentionally undermined domestic public support. News media editors for their part, came away with the conviction “that the only decent military story was an expose.” <sup>[lxvi]</sup> Today, the confluence of cynical, military naïveté among numerous reporters, and a real-time 24-hour news cycle, causes many—if not most—military leaders to see the news media as a potential menace that must be carefully managed. While American armed forces have, in the Internet, the capability to bypass the news media in delivering information direct to the public, <sup>[lxvii]</sup> the generally well-known hostility of the news media can also confer political legitimacy in the eyes of a skeptical world audience. In the words of one US Army officer in Kuwait: “We want you here to document the gas and the other stuff Saddam has in his arsenal. If he has it, or, God forbid, uses it, the world’s not going to believe the US Army. But they’ll believe you.” <sup>[lxviii]</sup> This is the greatest military incentive to the “embedding” of news media in military operations, and it is almost wholly responsible for the unprecedented cooperation exhibited in the 2003 “Iraqi Freedom” conflict.

The effort to fortify the impact of information in support of policy increasingly rests upon compelling stories from the news media (foreign and domestic) empowered to observe and report in real time. To facilitate this end, Washington news media bureau chiefs were invited to meet with Pentagon public affairs personnel in October 2002 and again in January 2003. According to Assistant Secretary of Defense Victoria Clarke’s deputy, Bryan G. Whitman: “We recognized early on that we needed to make truth an issue should there be a military campaign, because Saddam Hussein was a practiced liar, a master of deception, and the way you mitigate that is to have objective third-party accounts from professional observers. We also believed Americans deserved to see exactly how well trained their military forces were, how dedicated and professional.” The issues and compromises debated at these meetings established the framework for embedding journalists. This framework was crafted with an eye to providing a reusable template for future operations in other unified commands.

According to Marvin Kalb, the veteran CBS News correspondent and now a senior fellow at the Shorenstein Center for Press, Politics and Public Policy at Harvard: “I think the embedding strategy is a

gutsy, risky call for Rumsfeld, and his fingerprints are all over it. He believes that one must enlist the support of the American people, and the way you get that is to get the media."<sup>[lxix]</sup> Mr. Kalb is only half-right. The international audience is the real center of gravity in the long-term conflict against terrorism. It is clear that the techniques employed to generate support at home do not necessarily translate well abroad, and world public opinion remains overwhelmingly opposed to the invasion of Iraq. Both at home and abroad, message management is nearly as important as military management<sup>[lxx]</sup> and each effort cuts both ways. The news media is therefore just one of many tools employed in this effort.

On the battlefield, embedded news media coverage has served to humanize the soldiers and Marines—their hopes, fears and raw youth. In the process, it has reinforced the broader framing of the Iraq conflict as good versus evil. "I think the White House and the military establishment have programmed an irresistible story for journalists in this country," said Joe Lockhart, a Clinton administration press secretary. "For every hour of battle planning, there's another room where they are figuring out, 'How do we present this in a way that will bring support to what we are doing?'"<sup>[lxxi]</sup> The US wants to be seen as conducting a humane war of liberation—with high regard for the lives of innocent noncombatants—while also scaring Iraqis into swift capitulation. For its part, Saddam Hussein's oppressive regime presents itself as a victim, while simultaneously hoping to project strength and defiance on the home front.<sup>[lxxii]</sup> Al-Jazeera, the Qatar-based satellite network that tailors its version of the news to attract and maintain a massive following in the Arab world, broadcast dramatic images of casualties it said were caused by the US attack on Basra, followed by exploitive images of POW's being interrogated alongside executed Americans. It offered interviews with the first Iraqi casualties at a Baghdad hospital, reported widely on violent demonstrations outside the US Embassy in Sanaa, Yemen, and issued a special report alleging ties between senior members of the Bush administration and US oil companies.<sup>[lxxiii]</sup>

Editorial bias for or against the war are more apparent in newspapers than on television or radio by virtue of less speed and therefore a competitive requirement for more analysis. The European press provided heavy coverage in the first week of the war, with 10 to 12 pages devoted daily to reports from the field and different capitols.<sup>[lxxiv]</sup> Nevertheless, television reporters armed with videophones and embedded in tanks and armored personnel carriers have proven to be the first news media stars of Operation Iraqi Freedom. A public relations dream, they showed live pictures of the American 7th Cavalry charging towards Baghdad past the hulks of Iraqi tanks from the 1991 war. "What TV does so well is to take viewers to places they'd never be able to go and where we need to be,"<sup>[lxxv]</sup> says Bob Steele, director of the ethics program at Poynter Institute, a school for journalists. Live pictures of the battlefield are an obvious military concern as they may provide targeting information, capabilities and intentions, intelligence, battle damage assessments and, when skillfully edited, enemy propaganda. Military officials monitoring press coverage may not be able to terminate transmissions from the battlefield before inadvertent damage is done to operational security. Clearly, the unit commanding officer, who bears ultimate responsibility, will have pressing duties away from the news media. "If you or I had to decide what compromises operational security, I'm sure we would disagree,"<sup>[lxxvi]</sup> said Kathryn Kross, CNN's Washington bureau chief.

Drafting an embedded news media compact is only a first step. As the conflict evolves, the costs and benefits of embedded news media must be constantly reevaluated, with restrictions lifted or adjusted as warranted. The method for judging, resolving, or arbitrating conflicts of interest between the two parties is properly assigned to the sponsoring unit's commanding officer, who is vested with wide latitude up to, and including expulsion. Combat does not allow for an ombudsman, or afford a great deal of the unit commander's time. The Uniform Code of Military Justice was born of the same need for combat efficiency. From a strategic, risk versus cost-benefit perspective, there are times when



incorporating the news media is not warranted. The DoD is not in the business of altruism, it is in the business of national security, ultimately defending and sometimes expanding a bubble within which citizens (foreign and domestic) can enjoy constitutional privileges not available without.

The connection between politics and the news media has grown closer over the years, so much so that the Pentagon is convinced that success in the global war on terrorism is doubtful without a robust information strategy. Virtually every nation in the world regulates the news media to one degree or another, none less so than the United States. In the final analysis, the American news media has a tremendous stake in the longevity of a political system that has emancipated more of humanity from totalitarian regimes and censorship than any polity in human history. A proper balance of press freedom and national security serves all interests.

*"I doubt that in a conflict of this type, there's ever been the degree of free press coverage as you are witnessing in this instance."*

Donald Rumsfeld, March 21, 2003

### **THE NEWS MEDIA SEMINAR'S INTERNATIONAL COVERAGE: OUT WITH THE OLD AND IN WITH THE NEW, OR VICE VERSA?**

By Mr. Francis McCarthy

With Ms. Christina Van Fossan and Ms. Cherie Jackson

*"We got quite a bollocking for that."*

British editor on unauthorized movement of reporters between Marine lines in Iraq

In many respects the British media has similar goals, problems and challenges as the American media. But as the above quote demonstrates, a common language can still separate us! The impact and the perception of the American media are extensive. Good or bad, intentional or unintentional, it was evident that the American news media exports American culture, ethics, and standards abroad. Even in Great Britain, historic home of the modern free press. Of particular note, British journalists and media analysts from both the government and private sectors repeatedly commented on the American media's dedication to accuracy and quest for the truth - noteworthy praise from a nation with media roots older than our own.

The British news media environment, particularly the daily print media, is far more competitive than our own. Numerous British dailies (as compared with the two or three daily newspapers in most American major cities) compete for an audience. This intense competitiveness, in part, contributes to the British news media's more emotional style of journalism (as opposed to what they consider the more sober and subdued American journalistic style) to attract readers.

One unique aspect of two storied publications, The Financial Times and The Economist, is their pronounced global reach. The former publishes on several continents while the weekly The Economist boasts a larger readership in the US than in the UK. Each publication, by its interests and areas of concentration, is targeting a similar audience that can afford to subscribe. Interestingly, in an illustration of globalization, an American female CEO, considered the most powerful female CEO in the UK and Europe, manages the company that owns both publications.

Among the most unique government/media relationships we encountered anywhere is the "Defence-Notice Committee" in Great Britain. It is a voluntary working arrangement between journalists and an Ombudsman appointed by the Ministry of Defence. The Committee itself is composed of senior civil servants with the MOD and senior journalists who meet several times a year to "iron out their differences and misunderstandings." But the key relationship between the Ombudsman and the news reporters is singular.

The current Ombudsman, a retired Admiral, explained that he receives constant calls from

journalists on the appropriateness of stories, back-checking government terms and policies, and discussing with him areas they are considering investigating. Perhaps due to the willingness of British courts to issue restraining orders against newspapers (the Ombudsman estimated a half dozen orders were issued in the last year), this system works. But it is a delicate balancing act for all involved. While nothing similar exists in America, the D-Notice Committee does suggest that taking such an approach on national security matters is possible. At a minimum, a replication of the committee meetings themselves would improve the tone between government and the press and would also increase the working knowledge and understanding of one side to the other.

Similar to the US, the British press also has very few specialists in military affairs. In fact the problem appears to be even more pronounced in the United Kingdom. The Ministry of Defense noted the reduced military coverage during our trip to London. Another example illustrating this phenomenon is the fact that we met with the sole military reporter/editor for The Financial Times. It will be interesting to see in the future if the experience gained in the coverage of the war in Iraq begins to address this imbalance.

Despite some notable differences, there are also a great many similarities between the news media in the US and the UK, including: profit margins in the 20 to 25% range; a concern with foreign ownership; a generally positive reaction to the embedding process and the ubiquitous presence of 24-hour news reporting. As with the US, critics are concerned that the 24-hour news cycle is damaging to quality journalism.

Finally, any discussion of the news media in the UK is incomplete without noting that the BBC remains one of the preeminent news organizations in the world. The BBC has real global reach since it has a significant presence on every continent and a style and approach that is a standard in global journalism.

*“We are doing soft news for kids. We are not programming for the dead and the nearly dead.”*

“Young” Hungarian Broadcast News Editor

After just a dozen years of freedom, the news media industry in Slovakia and Hungary continues to face the challenge of working in an open and free press after 50 years of repressive Soviet domination. In some instances, the dissonance is jarring. They have moved from a controlled, Orwellian newspeak model to 21<sup>st</sup> century production values and commercial pressures. In essence, the “golden age of news,” the heroic newspaper journalism of muckrakers, and Ernie Pyle war coverage or the Edward R. Murrow examinations of political and social corruption, were not permitted for several generations.

But the journalistic communities have “rebuilt their broadcasting models, incorporating principles and world standards of journalism and working with other countries.”<sup>[lxxvii]</sup> They are still in the process of developing laws, regulations, and codes of journalistic ethics to cover their media practices. Despite their relative youth, they have become surprisingly sophisticated and technologically knowledgeable in a complicated and globalized media environment.

The introduction of democracy and capitalism has produced newfound freedoms, but also brought problems never encountered in their formerly tightly controlled media environments. As one Hungarian media expert informed us: “Some parts of freedom and democracy are not as easy as we’d like.” Hungarian journalists still work in an environment in which the “government can influence, withdraw and create circumstances to deprive stations of income.”<sup>[lxxviii]</sup> While democracy has provided the opportunity for the news media to print, write and disseminate news openly; democracy also provides the same opportunities for opponents to openly attack and harshly criticize the media and government officials.

In part, the arguments are eerily reminiscent of our own current American dialogues on the media; media outlets questioning the objectivity of their counterparts and public officials refusing to

cooperate with media they deem in opposition to their views. It is a labeling process that, while trying to establish a distinctive “brand” for their paper or station or to boost or protect a politician, also diminishes the overall profession.

Slovak and Hungarian media are a mixture of privately owned, and partially and wholly government subsidized entities. In part, this spectrum represents the gradual weaning of state institutions into market competitors, but it also creates a tension among the differing forms of ownership. New to the world of capitalism, they are struggling in highly competitive markets to gain market share and advertising funding.

Like their American and western European counterparts, Slovak and Hungarian media are constantly searching for ways to entice readers, listeners and viewers to media presentations. Some reported their biggest frustrations were audiences that were more interested in entertainment and music than news. They have imported a lot of US programming including the reality show “Big Brother.” Hungary’s RTL Klub TV, one of the country’s largest private television stations reported that “Entertainment is the money machine; it drives the train.”<sup>[Lxxix]</sup>

Programs showcasing politics and the country’s fledgling parliamentary procedures are not overly popular, but are broadcast as a public service. In Slovakia, the military had a close relationship with the national radio and the media gave extensive coverage (not quite matching that of the successful hockey team) to Slovakian units assisting in post-war Iraq. However, the Hungarian tabloid press uses the British tabloid model, with an emphasis on articles of general interest. A foreign editor of one major newspaper noted with a tone of resignation: “... foreign news ends up being about the fashion sense of Columbian drug lords and stories about Brigitte Bardot.”<sup>[Lxxx]</sup>

These budding democracies have embraced world standards of journalism and have become members of major media organizations such as the European Broadcasting Union (EBU). The American model of journalism was considered to be one of the highest world standards because of accuracy and ethics. The BBC was also held up as a model for journalistic standards. Interestingly, despite the growth of local media, the BBC is retaining its presence in this area.

The news media of Slovakia and Hungary appear to be well on their way to merging into the global media community. The challenges they face are great, but their accomplishments and zeal are impressive.

**CONCLUSIONS:** In the American news media, journalism and capitalism coexist in spite of the tension between public service and profitability. While market share and profitability serve as the metrics that measure the overall economic viability of the news media industry, the old adages of “fair and objective” continue to be the journalistic hue and cry that forms the baseline for quality journalism. The delicate balance between journalistic excellence and financial profitability, though sometimes shaky, continues to be the hallmark of the American media, making it the most successful and objective in existence today.

Strategic leaders and decision-makers must recognize that the American news media industry is a critical piece of the information element of our nation’s power. It contributes to the shaping and molding of the American domestic, political, and international messages. With the explosion of technology and news outlets delivering news “at the speed of light,” senior leaders must know and understand the industry in order to effectively “manage the message” of events that surround them.

The relationship between government and the media can and should be mutually beneficial, as illustrated by the recent, qualified success of the embedded journalist experiment during Operation IRAQI FREEDOM where the press facilitated a better understanding of defense issues by the American people. This model serves as a prototype for unprecedented cooperation between government organizations and the news media. An American public that is fully informed by the news media on national and international issues contributes to a vibrant democracy, which in turn strengthens our national security.

## ENDNOTES:

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[i] Bill Kovach and Tom Rosenstiel, The Elements of Journalism, Three Rivers Press, New York, 2001, p17.

[ii] Thomas Carlyle, On Heroes: Hero Worship and the Heroic in History, H.R. Allenson, London, 1905, pp349-350. However, from the perspective of those researchers who see the media as situated within the model of a pluralist liberal democracy, the mass media are often seen as fulfilling the vitally important rôle of *fourth estate*, the guardians of democracy, defenders of the public interest. The term fourth estate is frequently attributed to the nineteenth century historian Carlyle, though he himself seems to have attributed it to Edmund Burke:

Burke said there were Three Estates in Parliament; but, in the Reporters' Gallery yonder, there sat a Fourth Estate more important than they all. It is not a figure of speech, or a witty saying; it is a literal fact, .... Printing, which comes necessarily out of Writing, I say often, is equivalent to Democracy: invent Writing, Democracy is inevitable. .... Whoever can speak, speaking now to the whole nation, becomes a power, a branch of government, with inalienable weight in law-making, in all acts of authority. It matters not what rank he has, what revenues or garnitures: the requisite thing is that he have a tongue which others will listen to; this and nothing more is requisite.

[iii] Leonard Downie, Jr. and Robert G. Kaiser, The News About The News, Alfred A. Knopf, New York, 2002, p13.

[iv] The Reporters Committee for Freedom of the Press, "News Media' FOI Fee Status Awarded Public Interest Group," <http://www.rcfp.org/news/2003/0122epicvd.html>.

[v] Douglass Cater, The Fourth Branch of Government, Houghton Mifflin Company, Boston, 1959, p7.

[vi] Dale Minor, The Information War, Hawthorn Books, New York, 1970, pvii.

[vii] Mark A. Thalhimier, "Profile of the American News Consumer," p2, <http://www.rtnda.org/resources/consumer/nncpanc.htm>.

[viii] Ibid.

[ix] "Public's News Habits Little Changed by Sept. 11: Americans Lack Background to Follow International News," *Pew Research Center Biennial News Consumption Survey*, The Pew Research Center for the People & the Press, June 9, 2002, p4. <http://people-press.org/reports/pdf/156.pdf>.

[x] Federal Communications Commission Audio Division, "Broadcast Station Totals," <http://www.fcc.gov/mb/audio/totals/bt030331.html>.

[xi] Federal Communications Commission Audio Division, "Broadcast Station Totals," <http://www.fcc.gov/mb/audio/totals/bt030331.html>. George Williams and Scott Rogers, "Radio Industry Review 2002: Trends in Ownership, Format, and Finance," Federal Communications Commission, Media Bureau Staff Research Paper, [http://hraunfoss.fcc.gov/edocs\\_public/attachmatch/DOC-226838A20.doc](http://hraunfoss.fcc.gov/edocs_public/attachmatch/DOC-226838A20.doc). According to these sources, the Federal Communications Commission, there are 13,383 licensed commercial and educational radio stations, which represent a 5.4 percent increase in the number of radio stations between March 1996 and March 2002. Meanwhile, the number of radio owners declined by 34 percent during this six-year period. This decline is primarily due to mergers between existing owners.

[xii] "Facts about Newspapers, US Daily and Sunday," Newspaper Association of America Website, <http://www.naa.org/info/facts02/index.html>. pp.12-14; "Facts about Newspapers, US Daily and Sunday Newspaper Reading Audience," Newspaper Association of America Website. [http://www.naa.org/info/facts02/4\\_facts2002.html](http://www.naa.org/info/facts02/4_facts2002.html). Daily newspaper readership has in fact diminished over the last three decades, from 77.6 percent of the adult population in 1970 to 54.3 percent in 2001. There were 1,468 daily US newspapers, of which the 20 largest newspapers made up over 25 percent of the 55.6 million circulation. Consolidation within this segment has led to the top ten companies, which own over 260 newspapers, accounting for 43 percent of this circulation. The top media companies (in revenue) as of 2001 include Gannett, Tribune, Knight-Ridder, New York Times, Advance publications, Dow Jones, Cox, Hearst, McClatchy, and MediaNews Group. "Top Media Companies by Sector," AdAge.com, 19 August 2002, <http://www.adage.com/page.cms?pageId=941>.

[xiii] David A. Anderson, a former journalist and currently the Thompson & Knight Centennial Professor at the University of Texas School of Law, has summarized this transition from the right of the individual using a printing press to ability of the modern news media to write and speak with the protections of the First Amendment:

The concept of press as journalism cannot claim a historical pedigree. When the First Amendment was written, journalism as we know it did not exist. The press in the eighteenth century was a trade of printers, not journalists. [note omitted] To the generation of the Framers of the First Amendment, "the

press" meant "the printing press." It referred less to a journalistic enterprise than to the technology of printing and the opportunities for communication that the technology created. [note omitted] "Freedom of the press" referred to the freedom of the people to publish their views, rather than the freedom of journalists to pursue their craft.

Only in the second half of the nineteenth century did newspapers begin to systematically use their own employees to gather news and produce features and commentary. The technologies of the industrial revolution made it possible for newspapers to become large and profitable enterprises. The growth of cities and the development of mass-production printing machinery produced the "penny press" and the possibility of mass circulation. [note omitted] The development of commerce, particularly brand-name products, created a need for mass advertising and that produced advertising-driven newspapers with many pages to be filled. It was this evolution of the newspaper that created the occupation of journalism. In the twentieth century, universities created journalism schools to supply the market for journalists, and journalists organized themselves into professional societies and unions. [note omitted] Only then did the press come to be understood as a collective journalistic enterprise.

Obviously, then, journalism as we know it cannot have been what the Framers had in mind when they used the term "press." This is not necessarily a fatal objection to defining press today in terms of journalism, however. First, for non-constitutional purposes, the question is not what the Framers intended, but what legislators or regulators meant when they employed the concept of press (or what they really meant when they used inadequate terms such as "newspaper" or "news media"). Second, for constitutional purposes, because the printing industry as the Framers knew it no longer exists, even an originalist might conclude that the Press Clause should be interpreted to protect whatever constitutionally important function the eighteenth-century press served, and they might conclude that today that function is served by journalism. That seems to be what the Supreme Court has done. The Court did not take First Amendment claims seriously until after World War I, [note omitted] did not apply the First Amendment to the states until 1925, [note omitted] and did not use it to invalidate a restriction on the press until 1931. [note omitted] Thus, by the time the Court began to give effect to the First Amendment, collective journalistic enterprise had become the dominant characteristic of the press and the Court's free-press rhetoric seems to refer to the press in that sense, rather than as a technology for printing.

The middle decades of the twentieth century - the 1930s, 1940s, 1950s, and 1960s - were the heyday of the Press Clause in the Supreme Court. During this period, the Court invoked the Press Clause in many cases and appeared to rely on it, rather than the Speech Clause, to protect freedom of the press. [note omitted] It was also the formative period for most of the non-constitutional law of the press. Both the press and the government grew rapidly during this period, giving rise to the kinds of issues (such as accreditation, subsidies, regulation) that gave legislators and regulators occasion to define "press."

Mid-century was a period of widely shared norms within the field of journalism. In World War II the press was sufficiently cohesive that it could, and did, agree to a scheme of voluntary censorship of war news. [note omitted] Members of the press corps acceded to President Roosevelt's wish to not be shown in a wheel chair and observed an unwritten convention that the private foibles of public people were not news. [note omitted] Serious discussion about the role of the institutional press blossomed during this time, and what constituted the press for these purposes apparently seemed self-evident. [note omitted] The most famous national consideration of the role of the press ever undertaken, the 1947 Commission on Freedom of the Press, identified the press as "the existing agencies of mass communication" without further discussion. [note omitted] The Supreme Court decisions invoking freedom of the press also assumed that the term needed no elaboration.

David A. Anderson, "Freedom of the Press," 80 Texas Law Rev 429, Feb 2002, pp. 447-449.

[xiv] Issues of Democracy, Electronic Journal of the US Information Agency Volume 2, Number 1, February 1997, <http://usinfo.state.gov/journals/itdhr/0297/ijde/ijde0297.htm>.

[xv] US Constitution, Amendment I.

[xvi] "'Freedom of the press, like free speech, basically meant that individuals could express themselves." *Ithiel De Sola Pool*, *Technologies of Freedom* 11 (1983). Contemporaneous references uniformly indicate that freedom of the press meant freedom to express one's views through use of the printing press. The 1776 Pennsylvania Declaration of Rights, for example, asserted "that the people have a right to freedom of speech, and of writing and publishing their sentiments; therefore the freedom of the press ought not to be restrained." 1 *The Bill of Rights: A Documentary History* 266 (Bernard Schwartz ed., 1971). Similar language is found in the amendment proposed by the Pennsylvania ratifying convention in 1787.... Madison's original proposal for what became the First Amendment was similar: "The people shall not be deprived or abridged of their right to speak, to write, or to publish their sentiments; and the freedom of the press, as one of the great bulwarks of liberty, shall be inviolable." Madison's Fourth Proposal to the House (1789), in 1 *Debates and Proceedings in the Congress of the United States* 451 (J. Gales & W. Seaton eds., 1834). Although Madison's language could be read as recognizing a meaning



of freedom of the press distinct from the people's right to publish their sentiments, nothing in the debates of the First Congress or the ratifying convention suggests that either this language or the final language of the First Amendment was so intended." There is a great deal of dispute concerning this interpretation of the Press Clause: "Chief Justice Burger believed it precluded any special constitutional status for the press. He maintained that the Speech Clause was intended to protect "the liberty to express ideas and beliefs," while the Press Clause described "the freedom to communicate with a large, unseen audience." *First Nat'l Bank v. Bellotti*, 435 US 765, 800 n.5 (1978) (Burger, C.J., concurring). Leonard Levy argued that the Framers intended to protect the press only from prior restraints imposed by the federal government, that they did not intend to protect the press against other threats, such as seditious libel, and that the real purpose of the Press Clause was to reserve to the states exclusive power to regulate the press. See Leonard Levy, *Introduction to Freedom of the Press from Zenger to Jefferson*, at xix, lvii (Leonard Levy ed., 1966)." David A. Anderson, "Freedom of the Press," 80 *Texas Law Rev* 429, Feb 2002 at notes 90 and 91, emphasis added.

[xvii] Benjamin C. Bradlee, former executive editor of the *Washington Post*, quoted in the American Forum for Global Education, found at <http://www.globaled.org/curriculum/cm2a.html>.

[xviii] "...the Founding Fathers did not proclaim freedom of the press and then resolutely stand aside. They expected government to put all constitutional rights as well as duties in a state of balance. Some [people] act as if they believe freedom of the press is the paramount freedom – so important that no other freedoms can exist without it. They seem to believe that any action required to produce a story is justified by the First Amendment. Unfortunately, such an attitude promotes the trampling of other, equally legitimate public interests – the national defense, an accused's right to a fair trial free from a jury influenced by news reports, the right of privacy and others." Caspar Weinberger, former US Secretary of Defense.

[xix] The current version, The Official Secrets Act of 1989, is available at [http://www.hmso.gov.uk/acts/acts1989/Ukpga\\_19890006\\_en\\_1.htm](http://www.hmso.gov.uk/acts/acts1989/Ukpga_19890006_en_1.htm).

[xx] "Public's News Habits Little Changed by Sept. 11: Americans Lack Background to Follow International News," *Pew Research Center Biennial News Consumption Survey*, The Pew Research Center for the People & the Press, June 9, 2002, p27-31. <http://people-press.org/reports/pdf/156.pdf>.

[xxi] "News Media's Improved Image Proves Short-Lived," The Pew Research Center for the People & the Press, August 4, 2002, <http://people-press.org/reports/print.php3?ReportID=159>.

[xxii] Peter Johnson, "Trust in Media Keeps on Slipping", *USA Today*, May 27, 2003.

[xxiii] Ibid.

[xxiv] Ibid, note xix.

[xxv] Ibid, note xix.

[xxvi] Ibid, note xix.

[xxvii] David Laventhol, "Profit Pressures, A Question of Margins," *Columbia Journalism Review*, May/June 2001.

[xxviii] Ben Bagdikian, *The Media Monopoly*, Beacon Press, 2000, p. xvii. Radio and television serve as telling examples of the rapid results of consolidation: the number of commercial radio stations owners dropped from 5,100 to 3,800; similarly, the number of commercial TV station owners dropped from 543 to 360. In the process, the vast majority of radio newsrooms were eliminated. Despite the growth in the number of TV stations, the number of TV newsrooms declined by ten percent. Bill McConnell and John Eggerton, "Whether for Better News or Fatter Profits, Media Companies Want In on TV/Newspaper Cross-ownership," *Broadcasting & Cable*, December 10, 2001, p5.

[xxix] "Self-Censorship: How Often and Why? Journalists Avoiding the News", Pew Research Center for the People & the Press, April 30, 2003, <http://people-press.org/reports/display.php3?PageID=218>, para.1.

[xxx] William Safire, "The Great Media Gulp." *The New York Times*, May 22, 2003, <http://hodder.org/nytimes/SafireGreatMediaGulp.htm>.

[xxxi] Frank Ahrens, "FCC Plan to Alter Media Rules Spurs Widening Debate." *The Washington Post*, May 28, 2003, pA1.

[xxxii] Neil Hickey, "Power Shift." *Columbia Journalism Review*, March/April 2003, p. 26.

[xxxiii] Frank Ahrens, "FCC Set to Vote on Easing Media Ownership Rules." *The Washington Post*, June 2, 2003, pA6.

[xxxiv] Robert McChesney and John Nichols, "Media Democracy's Moment," *The Nation*, February 24, 2003, p2.

[xxxv] Robert J. Thompson, "500 Channels, But No Clear Picture of What We Want," *The Washington Post*, May 25, 2003, pB3.

[xxxvi] Robert MacNeil, *The 1997 Catto Report on Journalism and Society*, The Aspen Institute, Washington DC, 1997, p22.

- [xxxvii] Kovach and Rosensteil, p12. \_
- [xxxviii] Maria E. Grabe, Shuhua Zhou, and Brooke Barnett, "Explicating Sensationalism in Television News: Content and the Bells and Whistles of Form," *Journal of Broadcasting and Electronic Media*, Sep 22, 2001.
- [xxxix] Lecture by a distinguished journalist to the News Media Industry Study, Industrial College of the Armed Forces, Washington, DC, Spring, 2003.
- [xl] Peter Kann, "10 Disturbing Trends in US Journalism", Editor and Publisher, New York, Oct 29, 1994
- [xli] Shelby Coffey, III, "Best Practices –The Art of Leadership in News Organizations, Freedom Forum, Arlington, Virginia, p93.
- [xlii] Anderson, p3.
- [xliii] Ibid, note xix.
- [xliv] Downie and Kaiser, p207.
- [xlv] Michael Scherer, Newspapers Online, "Why Information Will No Longer Be Free", *Columbia Journalism Review*, Jan/Feb 2003, p6.
- [xlvi] Jon Katz, "The Future is the Net," *Media Studies Journal*, Freedom Forum, New York, p14.
- [xlvii] Ibid, p15.
- [xlviii] Paul Farhi, "TV's News Central: One Source Fits All: Md Studio Feeds Local Shows Nationally," *The Washington Post*, May 31, 2003, pA1.
- [xlix] Ibid, pA1. "We look to newspapers and TV stations as the most basic sources of information about a community," says a longtime Washington communications lawyer. "You're not going to find out who's running for mayor or city council from the cable networks or even the Internet. And they [Sinclair executives] are degrading that localism." He says it's an outgrowth of growing corporate ownership of the news media: "This is what happens when you have local media controlled by national companies that don't have any roots in the community. Sinclair not only isn't local, it's supplanting the people who are."
- [l] Richard R. Burt, "The News Media and National Security," *The Media and Foreign Policy*, edited by Simon Serfaty, St Martin's Press, New York, 1990, pp137-149. Burt argues that programs like "The McLaughlin Group" and "Crossfire" are entertaining and fun to watch, but contribute little to real understanding of national security issues around the world. For example, little attention is given to substantive discussion on the American policy of non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction (WMD). News coverage on the nuclear development in North Korea is episodic and scant, as it is on Iraq and Iran. The focus is more on the potential war with Iraq, absent context.
- [li] Richard Burt states that European misgivings over the 1986 American raid on Libya led to what was reported as the "worst crisis in the history of the [NATO] Alliance." This difference was short-lived and ignored the long history of European-American disagreements. The divide in trans-Atlantic relations today is receiving much the same coverage with regard to the 2<sup>nd</sup> resolution that was before the UN Security Council regarding the disarmament of Iraq.
- [lii] Ibid, pp147-149.
- [liii] Macarena Hernandez, "What Jayson Blair Stole From Me, and Why I Couldn't Ignore It," *The Washington Post*, June 1, 2003, pB5.
- [liv] Laventhol.
- [lv] Bagdikian, pxvii.
- [lvi] Ibid, pxxxiii.
- [lvii] Robert McChesney, *Rich Media, Poor Democracy: Communication Politics in Dubious Times*, The New Press, p18.
- [lviii] "Fear and Favor 2000: How Power Shapes the News," *Fairness & Accuracy in Reporting*, pl.
- [lix] Amy Mitchell, Project for Excellence in Journalism, Formal Comments on Media Ownership presented at the Forum on Media Ownership, Columbia University, January 16, 2003.
- [lx] Robert McChesney and John Nichols, "Media Democracy's Moment," *The Nation*, February 24, 2003, p1.
- [lxi] "New Federal Rules for Media Ownership: How Much does the Public Know?" Project for Excellence in Journalism, retrieved from URL: <http://www.journalism.org/resources/research/reports/fccsurvey/default.asp>.

- [ixii] McChesney and Nichols, p2.
- [ixiii] Michael Copps, "Remarks," Columbia Law School Forum on Media Ownership, January 16, 2003.
- [ixiv] Abigail Rayner, "Embattled Channel Searching for Clear Daylight," *The Times Online*, April 12, 2003, retrieved from URL: <http://www.timesonline.co.uk/article/0,,630-643078,00.html>.
- [ixv] Frank Ahrens, "FCC Plan to Alter Media Rules Spurs Widening Debate," *The Washington Post*, May 28, 2003, pA1.
- [ixvi] Ken Dilanian, "Seeking the Inside Story in an Iraq War," *Philadelphia Inquirer*, 16 March 2003, p1.
- [ixvii] McCormick Tribune Foundation, *The Military and the Media: Facing the Future*, Cantigny Conference Series, ed. Nancy Ethiel (Chicago: Robert R. McCormick Tribune Foundation, 1998), p107.
- [ixviii] Hampton Sides, "Unembedded," *The New Yorker*, "Talk of the Town," 24 March 2003, p12.
- [ixix] Todd S. Purdum and Jim Rutenberg, "Reporters Respond Eagerly To Pentagon Welcome Mat," *The New York Times*, 23 March 2003, p1.
- [lxx] Michael Tackett, "Granting Access to Media Helps Military Sell the War," *The Chicago Tribune*, 21 March 2003, p2.
- [lxxi] Ibid.
- [lxxii] Howard Rosenberg, "A War of Words, Sights and Sounds, Hearts and Minds," *The Los Angeles Times*, 22 March 2003, p1.
- [lxxiii] Glenn Frankel and Emily Wax, "War News Filtered Through Nations' Politics," *The Washington Post*, 23 March 2003, p32.
- [lxxiv] Alan Riding, "In Europe, War Coverage Is Everywhere, All the Time," *The New York Times*, 23 March 2003, p3.
- [lxxv] Paul Farhi, "You Are There," *The Washington Post*, 23 March 2003, pC1.
- [lxxvi] Ibid.
- [lxxvii] Conversation with Slovak Radio, May 13, 2003.
- [lxxviii] Meeting with Klubradio, May 16, 2003.
- [lxxix] Meeting with RTL Klub TV, May 16, 2003.
- [lxxx] Media Roundtable Discussion with Nepszabadsag, May 15, 2003.